

NEWS RELEASE

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BYOBag and changes to Nanaimo's checkout experience

New checkout bag regulation bylaw in effect July 1

Summary

Change is out there, and single-use plastic bags are disappearing from checkouts in Nanaimo. As of July 1, 2021, the City of Nanaimo's Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw No. 7283 is in effect.

Nanaimo shoppers are encouraged to bring their own reusable bags when they head to the store, as local businesses will no longer be providing plastic checkout bags. For shoppers that may need a bag at checkout, retailers have the option of selling paper bags with at least 40% post-consumer recycled content (\$0.15 minimum fee after July 1, 2021, and \$0.25 minimum fee after January 1, 2022). Some retailers will also have reusable bags available for sale at checkout (\$1.00 minimum fee after July 1, 2021, and \$2.00 minimum fee after January 1, 2022). Reusable bags will be washable and capable of 100 uses or more.

There are some exceptions to the rule, including small bags used for bulk goods and produce, and protective bags for newspapers and drycleaning.

To truly benefit the environment and make reusable bags a better option than the single-use plastic bags they are replacing, reusable bags need to be looked after and reused as many times as possible (generally, at least 100 uses per bag). Reusable bags are not recyclable at the end of their life, so shoppers are encouraged to make good use of them, remember to bring them along on each shopping trip, and avoid buying excess reusable bags.

Paper bags can also be reused, and at the end of their life, can become liners at the bottom of a green organics cart.

For more information, visit www.nanaimo.ca/goto/BYOBag

Strategic Link: Taking a leadership role and eliminating plastic bags from Nanaimo's checkouts supports Council's pillar of Environmental Responsibility.

Key Points

- As of July 1, 2021, the City of Nanaimo's Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw No. 7283 is in effect, and single-use plastic bags will no longer be a checkout option at retailers.
- The bylaw also regulates paper and reusable bags at checkout, ensuring that paper bags are made with at least 40% post-consumer content and reusable bags are capable of being washed and reused at least 100 times. A regulated minimum fee is in place for the purchase of any checkout bags.
- Shoppers are encouraged to look after their reusable bags and bring them to retailers each time they shop.

Quotes

"This change at our checkouts is a bit of a throwback; plastic checkout bags have only been mainstream for about 50 years, and yet, the extreme number of these around our planet has become a global problem. In the same way we've adjusted to become a mask-wearing society, we'll soon be well-practiced at remembering our reusable bags."

Quick Facts

- It's estimated that the average Canadian uses 400 single-use plastic bags per year. Prior to this bylaw, that's over 40 million plastic bags annually from Nanaimo alone!
- There is not a perfect shopping bag solution. Compostable bags often leave behind harmful microplastics, paper bags take a toll on our trees and have a high production and transportation footprint, and cotton bags - although perhaps the most reusable type of bag - have a heavy environmental impact in both production and transportation. Reusing bags as much as possible is the best way to go!

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